

A History about my family.

Bill # 5443

Married with 4 children ages 23, 20, 16, 12

My wife postponed her career to be a stay at home mom and raise our children. In today's society this is certainly against the grain, since the mid 80's more and more women entered the work force to supplement family income and fight off skyrocketing price inflation. We did not feel that both parents working was in the best interest of our children so instead, we lived a life within our means and not beyond. I was involved in coaching, fund raising, and many community events. My wife was a teacher's aide at a local Catholic school, a Girl Scout leader, and taught religion after school in our Parish. Although our life choice was financially difficult, I can stand before you and happily say that I have never missed a "pitch" "shot" "catch" "goal" "award" or "conference" in the past 23 years of raising my children until May 1st 2010 when DCF entered into my life.

January 2006.

In January 2006 due to economic conditions and having the foresight of the financial crisis and the cliff that our country was headed for my wife went back to school and obtained her nursing degree.

Spring 2008.

My family and I stood proud as my wife received her diploma and was honored top student and President of her graduating class.

After graduation, finding a job was the easy part, what was most difficult for her was which job she wanted to take that would work best around the schedule of the kids. Ultimately what was promised vs what she received was an eye-opener for her. In the field of nursing no such thing exists as a 9-5 job. She ultimately had to work nights and weekends.

This was a big transition for my children who were used to mom being there for them morning, noon, and night.

One of the important things when looking for a job was the understanding that she would need two weeks off from work in October. The reason? Our daughter was going to have a major operation.

October 28th 2008 15 year old daughter had back surgery.

My daughter had a spinal fusion to correct a severe curve in her spine. They placed two rods screwed into her spine.

My wife spent every minute of my daughters five day stay at her bedside and may have saved her life, as my daughter had a severe reaction to a drug after surgery and my wife's quick reaction saved her. Recuperated at home with my wife caring for her.

Received in home tutoring from the staff at her current school in November and December.

Returned to school in January with strict limitations on her physical activities to protect her from displacing her fusion. She could play no gym, no sports, could not ride a school bus or climb stairs, and received an elevator key, and a hall pass which allowed her to leave 5 minutes early from every class in order to avoid the risk of being bumped in the hallways.

At one point in late January we became aware of another child in school had made a physical threat against my daughter over a boy issue. When my wife learned of this she quickly wrote a letter to the high school Vice Principal to advise him of the situation, remind him of our daughter's recent surgery, and point out the potential permanent damage that could be caused to her if she were involved in any type of physical altercation.

February 2009 phone call from DCF.

In the early part of February my wife received a phone call from DCF while she was at work stating they needed to speak with her regarding a suspicion of child abuse. When my wife arrived at school my daughter was being held in a separate room (vice principal's office) and unbeknownst to us, our 12 year old son was being held and not only interrogated but physically examined in his school.

A DCF social worker told my wife that our daughter had arrived at school and it was reported by the (vice principal) that he had witnessed a bruise under her eye, and that when she was questioned about it, her explanation was shaky. She told them she had hit her face on the bathroom vanity and they did not believe it. My wife advised them that that was exactly how the bruise was received. Our daughter had sent a text message to her cell phone the previous night which she produced and showed to everyone.

I also want to point out that I advised DCF that I dropped off my daughter at school that morning and I did not notice any marks under her eye. The DCF worker agreed that she did not see any marks but the school social worker said she may have covered it with makeup before she left the house so I wouldn't see it. I told him that if that's what he believed, give her a washcloth and have her wash her face. Finally, after going over the details again, our daughter was allowed to join us and go home. By the way, neither DCF nor the school ever told us they had our son detained in the middle school. We only found out when he came home from school and told us. At this point, our family was reunited and case "closed"... or so we thought.

Mid February into March:

Notice some behavior changes in my daughter.

We could not directly point a finger at any particular reason for the changes but after numerous conversations with other family members and friends we all started working hard to help her thru this teenage period in her life, at the time we were speculating on the many changes in her life. Many of her peers were beginning to drive and were piling into cars after school to hang out at the mall and other teen loitering spots. She had always filled that time with practices and games, and now it was obvious to her what other kids were doing.

Her back surgery, pain, physical limitations, social issues, no basketball or baseball for the first time in 10 years. At the same time, she was missing her sports opportunities, her younger brother was getting a lot of attention for his accomplishments as a team leader on the school travel teams.

March:

My daughter was determined to play spring softball. Now, this may not sound like a big deal to most of you, but this was a major change for her. From the time she was 5 years old, she played hard ball on the little league teams. She passed the co-ed stage and learned to pitch. She was then the only girl in an all boys' league. At the Babe Ruth Level, 13 & up, she began to receive a lot of attention from softball coaches in the towns around us. We were receiving calls on a weekly basis from these coaches trying to convert her over to softball. At the time, my daughter wanted no part of it. She loves the game of baseball and the level of competition that she found. Her accomplishments on the field allowed her the opportunity to try out for a boys travel team in the summer of 2008 and she made the team. This was a great experience for her and ultimately I feel it was a turning point, I think she realized she was a step behind, bad speed became an issue. So in early March she decided she would turn to softball but- In order for her to participate it would require an early release and medical clearance from the doctors who performed surgery at Children's Medical Center in Hartford, and then a complete a physical and doctor's note from her pediatrician

Because of our daughter's (long awaited) decision to convert from hardball to softball my wife and I wanted to make it happen for her. We knew her switching would help her moving forward through high school and into college. So many Doctor's appointments and so little time.. Through March and early April my wife went to the school on several occasions to pick up and drop off forms in the involved process of trying to get her clearance in time for tryouts. During these visits to school my wife noticed that my daughter was always in the vice principals office. One day in particular, my daughter was behind his desk and he was sharing personal photos of himself on his computer with her. When my wife entered the office, he quickly exited out of the pictures and stood away from the desk.

April:

My daughter received clearance to participate in sports at a practice level only, with no games until April 28th. This clearance also revoked all of the privileges she had been enjoying. Gym class was back, elevator key and early hall passes were gone. She no longer was granted a free pass to roam the halls of school when she felt the need to get up and stretch due to back surgery. Instead she relied on the Vice Principle to provide her numerous passes throughout the day (we have copies) This is where the problems began, She spent a lot of time down at the front office and elsewhere, we started receiving numerous voice messages from the school that

our daughter was late or did not show up for class. My wife contacted the school and requested a meeting with the vice principle, this request was made about 3 times during the month of April and finally we got a date of April 29th to meet with Vice Principal. On April 28th our daughter came home and she advised us that our meeting we had scheduled (that we thought was confidential) was postponed and the vice principle would contact us to reschedule.

On April 20th My wife and I decided that our daughter needed someone to speak to regarding what was going on with her and after some research we found a child psychologist in New Milford CT and we went in to see him with our daughter and addressed our concerns. This appointment was very open and afterwards we spoke with our daughter and advised her if she felt comfortable with him she could go back a few times a month or we could find someone she felt comfortable with. Our daughter advised us that she thinks it's stupid but if we feel it's needed then she would prefer a female doctor.

Events in April that may have caused a slight mark on face. April 12th Easter Sunday while playing basketball with our younger son she collided with him head to head witnessed by family members after Easter dinner.

April 18th she fainted in the shower and bumped her head on toilet. This fainting spell was followed up with Danbury hospital as well as pediatrician. Drug test performed and came back negative. She did receive a mark under her left eye the size of a quarter with only a slight discolor to area could not be noticed from a distance it was my wife who noticed it when up close and when she asked her how she got it is when we learned she had fainted in the shower.

April 30th My daughters first softball game, my son and I were in attendance, the last play of the game my daughter playing shortstop ran over to cover second on a double play ball got taken out hard by a base runner and my daughter flipped over upon impact. This was a very scary moment for everyone as they all new she was recovering from back surgery and when she jumped up every one sighed a big relief that she was alright.

May:

Received a phone call from DCF May 1st that we needed to meet at DCF office and they had our daughter in custody. This time they did not ask questions they just informed us that a complaint and affidavits was filed by the school (vice principle) and three other staff members and our daughter now is confirming that her injuries are a result of being hit by her mother. Daughter was being placed on a 96hr hold and allowed to go with her grandfather. First night at my dads she escaped in the late night hours and was not found until the following morning with a girlfriend and her girlfriends mother at a flea market. My daughter was then placed into a foster home in Brookfield CT. Other important factors that need to be addressed are DCF also once again spoke with my son and witnessed by the social workers at his school, he adimently denied any such abuse occurred in our home and he advised DCF that his sister was fabricating story. The social worker at his school has gone out of her way to be supportive of our family throughout this ordeal as she heard the truth and she even went out of her way and said to us quote "I have no idea what is going on in that other building" meaning High School. The Local Police department who has a paid policeman at the school full time tried to get a statement from my daughter and she refused to cooperate with him.

I have hundreds of issues that need to be addressed for what had transpired from May through October while my daughter was in custody of the department. I will instead outline some of the most important ones not in any particular order of occurrence.

1. Daughter was held in vice principals office may 1st at the school without proper paper work from the department, the Police department advised the school they could not hold her against my will and they did anyway.
2. Daughter was refused medical treatment.
3. Inappropriate relationship with staff member at school.
4. Foster care had no oversight, daughter was allowed a midnight curfew and allowed to do as she pleased.
5. Daughter was left home alone with Foster Mom's sisters Boyfriend.
6. Daughter was told she could not contact us.
7. Our family psychologist made numerous attempts to arrange for counseling at our and her request and the department failed to acknowledge requests until months after.
8. My daughter was held in a psychiatric facility for over 6 weeks against our Dr's recommendation that she did not have any reason what so ever to be there. The department did not have another foster home for her and they tried to have her

committed to a long term residential facility. My daughter wrote a four page letter dated August 12th and addressed to any one that would listen that she wanted to come home and she was sorry for her mistakes and bad judgment.

9. Foster home refused to turn over her belongings to the police department when they went to her house demanding them. This included cell phone, computer, clothes, medicine, money.
10. Daughter maintained contact with the school vice principle via email and telephone over the summer months.
11. Daughter and her 16 year old girlfriend and two 18 year old boys arrested for trespassing hanging out in the grandstands of football field at a local school and drug possession (drugs on front seat of boys car) at 2am in the morning while in foster care, the drug that was on the front seat of car was taken from the foster home.
12. Daughter was shipped to foster home 1 hour from school, many days her transportation never showed up to pick her up for school as well as many days she was left at school for hours after before transportation showed up to bring her back to foster home.
13. DCF had no problem making arrangements for court appointed Dr for evaluations but refused make arrangements for family therapy for the first few months.
14. Daughter and her girlfriend (left at 7am) walked 2 hours from foster home one July morning to spend time with us and family out on our boat and when the foster mom woke up at 1pm and realized she was gone she called my daughter and advised her she was going to call cops, cops called my daughter and advised her to be home a 5pm. I dropped daughter off and foster mom took her computer, cell phone, and grounded her for spending the day with parents.
15. At one point a ccats program Dr. after meeting with my daughter for 10 minutes tried to prescribe a anti depressant medicine for my daughter.
16. Failed to make appointments for family therapy due to transportation problems.
17. My whole family has been seeing a family philologists twice a week since May 4th to deal with the problems and effects DCF has caused. This Doctor has over 100 hours of office time with us.
18. My longtime friend and attorney who spend numerous hours on this case finally gave up and sent me a bill and a letter telling me he gives up and he understands if I don't pay him.
19. DCF social worker "I know if I was you I would not be sending my daughter back to that school" This quote came 6 weeks into this case. Four months later DCF makes a decision overnight to send her back to same school without our input on the matter.
20. The first status conference or hearing with DCF the school sent a social worker from the school to attend and he sat in his chair totally clueless about everything, He did nothing but play with his pen, but the advise he did offer me as we walked out of the meeting was "Mr. Casey I don't know why you are so upset the charges are against your wife not you"
21. Court appointed attorney who is an advocate for children was very supportive of us.
22. Court appointed guardian from children in placement was very supportive of us.
23. Staff at Danbury hospital ignored the request of us parents as well as Insurance company, Family Doctor and instead relied on DCF to make life changing decisions.
24. Had the opportunity to meet with a young male social worker from DCF who was not familiar with our case but stated this to me "our department has faced so many financial cuts a lot of us are scrambling to pick up time"
25. The School staff (vice principle) was supposed to meet with our family physiologist to discuss this case and he has so far cancelled his appointments.

October 2009:

Our daughter was happily reunited with the family currently we continue therapy two times a week.

After our Daughter returned home about a week later my wife received a phone call from the local police department and was advised that there was a warrant for her arrest for assault third and she could turn herself in or they would come and get her, a bail was posted at \$25,000. Two weeks later the charges were thrown out. The charges where related to statement files back in May and it took 6 months for the judge to sign for warrant. I also want to point out that in the police officers own written statement he never observed any marks on my daughters face.

Although this experience has caused an inexplicable amount of pain physically, mentally, emotionally, and financially. We are a family of faith, values and strength, together we will overcome this. But let me be clear I will not be silenced I will speak until you are deaf or until my voice runs out of oxygen.

In closing I would like to point out that child abuse is totally unacceptable to me. Clearly one cannot deny the existence of it today. I do not believe the statistics or neglect or abuse that the Department of Children and families provides to the state are accurate. I would like to think I had a better chance of being hit by lightning, How many cases is the truth overlooked and substituted for money.

How many cases like mine does the department dangle a carrot in front of parents while they hit you with a stick so they can close the case as if they where the solution not the problem. I believe the whole organization from a-z should be reviewed what happened to the good people whose interests were the children. My priority recommendation to you is to pass a law that requires all children who come into this department to participate in mandatory PRIVATE SECTOR COUNSELING within 96hrs.

I would also like to add one more thing for you to think about that Cleary shows the innocence of a family who has been victimized by the system and the system knows it, my daughter was asked this question on the first home visit since returning home. DCF question *"So how does it feel to be back home"* daughters answer *"great as if I never left"* DCF response *"that's great"*

My question to you the legislators is

How could a DCF worker think *"that's great"* to that answer unless they knew the real truth?

JC

Even though I was very against being hospitalized because I do not need to be in a hospital, there were some positives I was able to pull out. I have been given an opportunity to really think about what is important to me. Not being able to have simple things such as shampoo, deodorant, and toothpaste in my bathroom has given me a new outlook on life and the things I need vs. the things I want. Websites such as Facebook and Myspace that played such a big role in my life before are no longer important. Now what really matters is family, school, and helping those less fortunate than myself. Maybe I needed to make a few mistakes in order to really understand the importance of different things in my life. I can honestly say that this was a mistake well learned from and taking that pill to get high was the stupidest thing I have ever done, but I was experimenting. Trying to figure out what's so great about it that people are willing to sell themselves, and steal just to get another high. I never understood it and even now having tried it I still don't understand because it is something I have no interest in doing again. All I know is it is a cold and terrifying world and I want to be at home where people love and care about me and can guide me in the right direction if I need it.

Which brings me to the next thing. I know for a while I was hesitant to meet with my parents or to

boat with my family and go to my brothers birthday party, as well as meeting with my family in the hospital. I have realized how it would be to go back home. My parents have agreed to do family counseling with Dr. Moore and then we could move on like a normal healthy, happy family. There is no doubt in my mind that home is where I need to be, and I have faith in the system to help me achieve this goal. Residential would be a terrible environment for me. The children who attend these programs have a chemical dependency or behavioral problems. I do not fit this criteria, it was made clear that I do not have a chemical dependency when I was placed in the hospital because if I did I would have had to be put on detox which did not happen. It is also clear that I do not have a behavioral problem because prior to this I have a clean record. I am someone who wants to continue going to my school, graduate, go to college, get a good job, and have a family. This will be difficult to achieve in a Residential facility.

If people never made mistakes they would never learn. Accept me for who I am as well as the bad decisions I have made due to lack of experience. I am sorry for the choices I have made and I am really trying to make the best of the situation. I should not be placed in Residential and I hope by trusting the system they will make the correct decision by sending me home. I am asking for your ~~response~~ understanding. Because I know with the support

AUG-12-2009 20:00 FROM:

TO:

P.4
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judgement I have made will be forgiven.

X [REDACTED] 8/12/09

Via Fax 203-207-5170 DCF

~~203-207-5170~~

US mail